GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

for

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Education

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THE WAY DATES ARE GATHERED

This harvest of the region treated in Bulletin No. 3 is gathered in November and December, and all the population of the oasis take part. A small boy, with a primitive sickle, climbs the palm; others follow him. The top boy cuts the great bunches and hands them to the boy beneath him, who passes them down from boy to boy until they reach the ground.

Tear off along this line if desired.

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Aland Islands: Which Threatened a Baltic Fiume

CAUGHT in the swirl of the minor flurries that disturb Europe are the remote Aland Islands, where Swedes and Finns clashed in a manner suggestive of the dispute between Jugo-Slavs and the Italians along the Adriatic. The rival claims of those countries now are in process of settlement.

For more than 200 years the Aland Islands, which are situated like a cork in the wide mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, have been a sort of Alsace-Lorraine question between the Swedes and the Russians. After having passed back and forth several times, they were finally ceded to Russia in 1809. During the reign of Nicholas I they were strongly fortified, a move most distasteful to Sweden because the islands occupy an important strategic position with respect to Stockholm, the Swedish capital, which is less than 100 miles to the southwest from Bomarsund, the chief fortification of the islands.

Left Unfortified by International Agreement

These fortifications were short-lived. In 1854, during the Crimean War, a Franco-British fleet, under Sir Charles Napier and Baraguay d'Hilliers, destroyed the works, and after that time the islands were left unfortified, in accordance with an international agreement.

The Aland group, which is separated from the Swedish mainland by Aland Bay (Aland Haf) and from the Finnish mainland by Skiftet Sound, is composed of some 300 islands and rocky islets, the total area of which is not more than 550 square miles. The largest island, Aland, a name signifying "land of streams," is almost as large as all the others combined, having an area of 247 square miles, about twice the size of Martha's Vineyard.

Cattle raising and fishing are the chief occupations of the 25,000 people who live on the islands. Some cereals (barley and oats) are grown on the thin soil, and there are a few forests of birch, spruce and fir.

Bathing Resort Chief Town of Islands

Finnish troops recently were reported marching through the streets of Mariehamm. This attractive little bathing resort is the chief town of the islands, having a population of 1,400. In times of peace a daily steamer service is maintained between this port and Abo, the oldest and historically

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A LITTLE BEDOUIN GIRL (See Bulletin No. 3)

The girls of this race of desert wanderers are quite attractive, but, owing to the hard life they lead, they soon become old and wrinkled. The women do practically all the labor of the camp—fetching wood, drawing water, pitching and striking the tents, milking the goats and camels, and preparing the food.

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Londonderry: the "Maiden City of Ireland"

DERRY, or Londonderry, in Ulster, known in song and legend as the Maiden City of Ireland, has the charm of the cheery, busy town and is truly characterized by the stirring marching song which these Irish sing on their days of celebration:

> Where Foyle his swelling waters roll northward to the main,
> Here, Queen of Erin's daughters, fair Derry fixed her reign;
> A holy temple crowned her, and commerce graced her street;
> A rampart wall was round her, the river at her feet.

These four lines briefly tell Londonderry's story. Along the two-mile quays of the river Irishmen jolly each other as they load and unload the foreign, colonial and coasting trade of the docking vessels. For the Foyle is wide and deep, and large tonnage ships sailing the flags of France, Australia, Brazil, the United States, and India bring their wares to her port. Busy looms in the city make linen, and then laughing, twinkly-eyed Irish girls make the linen into shirts before it leaves Londonderry. The salmon fishery on the Foyle is important and the town has timber mills, foundries, grain mills, and shipyards.

Has Charm of a Romantic Past

But Derry has for the traveler a charm greater than its bustle and up-and-doing atmosphere—the story of a past replete with romance, devotion to principle, and the exhibition of an indomitable spirit. Columba, the greatest of the Irish saints after Patrick and Brigid, in 546 looked on the oak-clad hills and coveted them. Here he founded his abbey, known as Daire-Columbkille, or Columba's Oak Grove, within the shadow of the great fort on a neighboring hill, the stronghold of the Lord of Tyrone, in order that his sanctuary might have the protection of the fort. But in vain did he reckon his chances against the Danes and Saxons who, time and again, pushed their boats against his shores. Despite their plundering and burnings, the settlement, of which he had made the nucleus, grew and maintained its independence until 1609.

Derry was then given to the Corporation of London, which tacked on the prefix London. Three years later the Irish Society, to which Londonderry and much of the surrounding country had been given, pledged itself to enclose Derry within walls, and these walls, wide enough for a coach and four, are excellently preserved today, perhaps to the inconvenience of the inhabitants, but certainly in accordance with their sentiment and wishes. Any one who expressed a desire that they be taken down would be treated as a traitor. Long ago they grew too small to encompass all the inhabitants of the hustling port, but they stand like a stiff belt around the waistline of the hill on which the city is built. The most inconvenient thing about them is that, though they are more than a mile in circumference there are only seven gates leading through them. Because the walls defended the city in the siege begun by

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the most interesting city of Finland. The voyage from Abo to Mariehamn takes about 10 hours.

It was in the waters adjacent to the Aland Islands that Peter the Great's navy won its first important victory, defeating the Swedes in 1717.

Only about 90 of the 300 islands are inhabited, and the fisherfolk, in the main, are of Swedish descent.

Sweden's desire to hold the islands arises in part from the fact that they control the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia, through which most of that kingdom's internal trade is carried on.

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A DESERT LANDSCAPE

Those who know the nomad Arabs say that they are possessed of a love for the desert which is passionate and unquenchable. They love that perfect solitude, and in spite of all the hardships and danger of desert life, no reward is great enough to make them forsake it. Note the tracks made by the soft, spreading foot of the camel.

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Old Letters Reveal Lost Chapter in World History

LAVA preserved the secrets of Roman civilization in Pompeii; tombs protected the records of ancient Egypt's culture; and now there is prospect that some long-neglected letters may reveal one of the most fascinating chapters in the historic trail of the Jewish people, and incidentally show that Africa loomed larger in the Middle Ages than modern historians have realized.

Hitherto Africa has figured slightly in medieval history. It still was a "dark continent" when Stanley and Livingstone penetrated it less than a century ago. Yet, in view of a remarkable documentary discovery made by Charles de la Ronciere, Librarian of the National Library in France, it would seem Jews of the fifteenth century had trading posts in northwest Africa, and carried on a vast commerce with the natives from the Sahara to the Atlantic and from Algeria to the Niger.

These native peoples, who finally resisted the inroads of Christian, Jew and Mohammedan, possessed sources of wealth in grain and gold. Some tribes lived in rock salt houses. Actual history in one case parallels the legendary account of the defense of Troy. Primitive religions and strange customs flourished in common with a civilization advanced enough to take accurate census of cities.

Timbuktu the Chicago of African Plains

Antonio Malfante, a Genoese citizen, traversed this region and wrote his descriptive letters, in 1447, from Timbuktu and Touat. Timbuktu was the Chicago of the west African plains; and Touat the center of the camel caravan traffic that exchanged the wheat and barley of Egypt for the powdered gold of Timbuktu and the precious salt from Teghazza.

All the places visited by Malfante were so well known to the Jews of his time that they were listed in a Catalan atlas prepared three-quarters of a century earlier for Charles V, according to M. Ronciere. But shortly after Malfante's visit, the Jews were driven out of Spain, and since the Jews were the only ones in Europe who knew of the Nigeria country, and apparently permitted no Christian to enter there except Malfante, the Jewish knowledge was lost to Europe. Not until Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs began his explorations in Algeria and Morocco in 1860 did the rest of the world again form a contact with the extensive regions of Malfante's travels.

Landing at a point west of Algiers, Malfante worked his way south to Touat, which Rohlfs believed himself to have been the first European to visit. Yet Malfante dated his first letter from there four centuries earlier.

Oasis Was Vast Commercial Center

Touat was an oasis, containing from 150 to 200 villages, which together formed a vast commercial center. Each had a chief. Travelers became the

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James II, a busy man must make quite a jaunt out of his way to find a passageway through them, but, true to Irish sentiment, he does it without a murmur. On one of the bastions of the wall an old gun, affectionately known as "Roaring Meg," points her nose over the city.

Quaint Cathedral Stands in Graveyard

Here, too, on the hill in the center of a crowded old graveyard, stands the quaint, squat cathedral with its queer pinnacled tower. It is called after St. Columba, although it is not on the site of the old abbey built by the Saint fourteen centuries ago.

On a high, inaccessible hill in the distance, looms the stronghold of the Lords of Tyrone. It is said that St. Patrick came to the fort to baptize Owen, who first set himself up to rule over the province of Tyrone, and St. Columba visited it before his exile. Here, too, captive Danes who had threatened the peace of the city were dragged in triumph.

Though every trace of the old castle has been obliterated, the massive stone wall fourteen feet thick and eighteen feet high, resembling the handiwork of a cyclops, has stood out grimly against the centuries. A small iron gate hangs across a two-foot doorway, the only entrance to its huge amphitheatre-like interior, which reveals further devices designed for the protection of the inmates.

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Gunning for Profiteers an Ancient Practice

PROFITEERING in foods and high wage demands by labor are far from being ultra-modern problems.

Ancient Egypt flogged its profiteers in the market places, and medieval England passed maximum wage laws, according to a communication by Ralph A. Graves to the National Geographic Society, which says:

"Following the devastation of the Black Death in England, in 1348-1349, cultivation of the fields was utterly impossible, and there were not even enough able-bodied laborers to gather the crops which had matured. Cattle roamed through the corn unmolested and the harvest rotted where it stood.

"Out of the situation which resulted from the impoverishment of the labor resources of the kingdom grew the first great clash in England between capital and labor. The peasants became masters of the situation. In some instances they demanded double wages, and whereas formerly land-owners had paid one-twelfth of every quarter of wheat as the harvesting wage, they were now forced to pay one-eighth.

Parliament Passed Anti-Loafing Laws

"Parliament hurriedly passed drastic laws in an effort to meet the new condition. Statutes provided that 'every man or woman, bond or free, able in body and within the age of threescore years, not having his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, provided that the lords of any bondsman or land-servant shall be preferred before others for his service; that such servants shall take only the wages which were customarily given in 1347' (the year prior to the first appearance of the plague).

"Violation of the statute meant imprisonment; and it was further provided that any reaper, mower, or workman leaving service should be imprisoned. If workmen demanded more than the regulation wage, they were to be fined double, and the land-owner who paid more than the prescribed sum was to be fined treble that amount. Runaway laborers were to be branded with an 'F' as a perpetual sign of their falsity. No bail was to be accepted for any of these labor offenses.

Early Measures for Food Control

"The first ordinance in English history designed to curb the greed of the middleman was passed nearly a century earlier (in 1258), when there was a bountiful harvest, but destructive rains caused the heavy crops to rot in the fields.

"But England did not originate food control measures. A low Nile in 967 A. D. resulted in a famine the following year, which swept away 600,000

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guests of these chiefs, and Malfante reported their protection superior to that in states like Tlemcen and Tunis. One of these towns was Tamentit, now a decayed village, whose people still recall the Jewish epoch. Arabian invaders earlier had routed the Jews who were masters of the Sahara and whose empire extended south to the Niger. Tamentit, Malfante wrote, sheltered both Jews and Mohammedans, who lived in harmony.

The native negroes valued copper highly, Malfante stated, and used it for money. Profiteering, apparently, is not a modern vice. Malfante complained, "The people here do not want to transact any business, if they do not make a commission of 100 per cent." And their business was on a big scale, at that. Half a million head of cattle, to mention but one item, were brought to market in the caravan season.

Where Houses Were Made of Rock Salt

Pushing on to Timbuktu, Malfante's host was the brother of a captain of desert industry, a man of great wealth, and possessed of trade information concerning all of north Africa. From him Malfante learned of such flourishing places as Teghazza, famous for its salt mines, and unique for its architecture. The houses were made of rock salt. Malfante noted that it never rained there, or the houses would have melted away.

Another town was famous for its magicians. It was attacked by numerous troops from the south under the King of Dahomey. Fifty Mohammedan defenders took refuge on a hill, and by night they were encircled by a human cordon, which, lit by camp fires, looked like a girdle of flame. They thought themselves lost. Their king was a magician. He proposed a duel with his opponent in which both of them should be transformed into goats. But he was defeated and all his followers were killed. The town, which abounded in riches, was totally ruined.

A census of Timbuktu and Gao, a rival city, was made, Malfante stated, as the result of a wager regarding which was larger.

To the south of the Mohammedan kingdoms were many states inhabited solely by savages. One of these tribes worshipped a mirror, believing that in the reflection of their faces they saw a Deity.

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Minsk: An Incubator of Bolshevism

ONE of the least interesting among Russian cities in its physical aspects, Minsk has an economic history that helps in understanding how Bolshevism spread so readily among the Russian people.

The industrial history of Minsk, where the Poles and the Bolsheviki met to discuss peace terms, is especially significant in view of present conditions in Russia. It was one of the centers where ideas long germinated which blossomed forth so suddenly into Bolshevism under the hothouse influences of war distress. There, in the early nineties of the last century, a group of dilettantes formed a Workingman's Union, later more accurately termed the Union for Struggle. Promulgation of literature, smuggled into the country or printed in secret, was a major activity of this group in Minsk. Few workingmen belonged to it.

Many Joined, But Few Agreed

In the course of five years these groups, working in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Minsk, had accumulated a number of followers, few of whom agreed. They gave wide publicity to the doctrines of Marx, mixed indiscriminately with every variety of radicalism, native and imported. With such a diversity of aims little was accomplished, and it was with the hope of formulating a definite program that the Union for Struggle and a committee of the Jewish Bund held their notable convention at Minsk in 1898. From that meeting arose the Social Democratic Workingman's Party.

The professed aims of various groups at that conference have a familiar ring. One urged that labor seek "complete liberation from the yoke of Capital"; another broadly declared for "immediate improvement of the condition of every workingman"; a third frankly provided that the mass of their adherents should not have a voice in the direction of the group, but rather should be "disciplined by continuous agitation."

Once more Minsk figured in an interesting chapter of Russia's economic history when Zubatov set two women to organize a labor party, among the Jews, under police protection. Originally an agent provocateur, Zubatov, when promoted to a high office among the political police, undertook to organize laboring men so their growing discontent would be directed against employers rather than against government officials. In Minsk a rival organization, the Universal Jewish Labor Union, immediately was formed, which quickly eliminated the "police union."

Located in an Industrial Sahara

Minsk is built upon the Svislotck River, nearly 500 miles southwest of Moscow by rail, and has a population of 105,000, fully half of whom are Jews. It was the capital of the old Russian Government of Minsk, which included some of the least fertile and least developed regions of the fallen empire.

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people in the vicinity of the city of Fustat. G'awhar, a Mohammedan Joseph, founded a new city (the Cairo of today) a short distance from the stricken town and immediately organized relief measures.

"The Caliph Mo'izz lent every assistance to his lieutenant, sending many ships laden with grain; but the price of bread still remained high, and G'awhar, being a food controller who had no patience with persuasive methods, ordered his soldiers to seize all the millers and grain dealers and flog them in the public market place. The administrator then established central grain depots, and corn was sold throughout the two years of the famine under the eyes of a government inspector."

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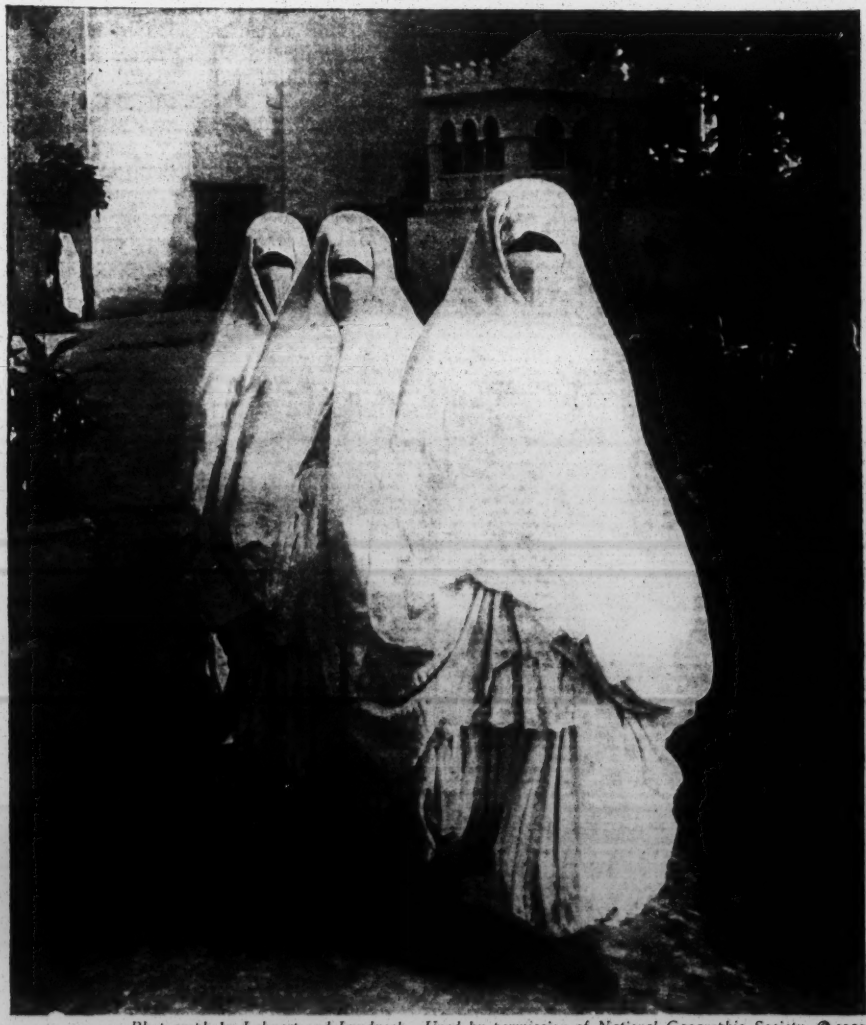
HUNGER PAINS HAVE DONE THEIR WORK; THE END IS NOT FAR OFF

In the four great famines of 1810, 1811, 1846, and 1849 the death toll is estimated to have been 45,000,000 Chinese. During the three years of dearth (1875-1878) which afflicted four provinces in the district known as the Garden of China nine millions perished in an area the size of France. Recent reports indicate another severe famine in China.

Its annual fair, held in March, furnished the chief event in the town's life. Its trade, mainly in corn, lumber and leather, gained perceptibly when it became the intersection point of the railway from Moscow to Warsaw and that from Libau to Kharkov. Formerly it maintained a municipal pawnshop.

The city has passed through the hands of many masters. In the time of William the Conqueror it was a dependency of the Princes of Podolsk. By the close of the twelfth century it had fallen into the hands of Lithuania. Three hundred years later it belonged to Poland, and at the time of the French Revolution Russia acquired it. Napoleon occupied it in 1812.



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ARAB WOMEN OF ALGIERS (See Bulletin No. 3)

Here is a picture taken at the entrance of a cemetery to which Moslem women resort once a week, usually on Fridays, the Moslem Sabbath. On the day of the weekly visit the cemeteries are by no means gloomy places; all men are excluded, and the ladies, laying aside their veils, indulge in impromptu picnics, with much laughter and gossip.

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